

Recent Verse of Varying Values

THE VEIL AND OTHER POEMS.

By Walter de la Mare. Henry Holt & Co.

DOWN-ADOWN-DERRY.

By Walter de la Mare. With illustrations by Dorothy P. Lathrop. Henry Holt & Co.

THE SWEPT HEARTH, AND OTHER POEMS.

By Amory Hare. John Lane Company.

SONGS AND MORE SONGS OF THE GLENS OF ANTRIM.

By Moira O'Neill. The Macmillan Company.

POEMS.

By Gerda Dalliba. With an Introduction by Edwin Markham. Duffield & Co.

HARLEM SHADOWS—POEMS.

By Claude McKay. With an Introduction by Max Eastman. Harcourt Brace & Co.

KINFOLKS.

Kentucky Mountain Rhymes. By Ann Cobb. Houghton, Mifflin Company.

THE YALE RECORD BOOK OF VERSE.

1872-1922. Yale University Press.

WHITE APRIL.

By Harold Vinal. The Yale Series of Younger Poets. Yale University Press.

DREAMS AND A SWORD.

By Medora G. Addison. The Yale Series of Younger Poets. Yale University Press.

HOMEWORK AND HOBBYHORSES.

New Poems by Boys of the Perse School. Edited by H. Caldwell Cook. E. P. Dutton & Co.

THE IRONMONGER.

By S. A. De Witt. Frank Shay.

A FEW FIGS FROM THISTLES.

By Edna St. Vincent Millay. Frank Shay.

TWO volumes of Walter de la

Mare's distinctive measures

came together from the press

this spring like twin peaches on a

southern wall, mellow, fragrant, full

of their special flavor. Or, if you

are particular about the figures, call

them two heavy clusters of aromatic

grapes, sweet and strong and

pungent, full of the magic wine

which his readers consume with such

gusto. You may have your choice—

some of these little crystal cups are

filled with what is more like peach

brandy than new wine; others still

flow smoothly upon the palate with

the suavity of unfermented, syrupy

juices of life, yet all are sparkling

with their latent meanings, to be

savored by little and little, in often

rereading.

Of all the more than fifty poems in

the new book "The Veil" seems least

suited to the prominence of a title

poem; it may be that he chose it be-

cause it was one short word, con-

venient for a book case and sugges-

sive enough of mystery to fit in with

his whim and also pique the reader's

curiosity. Almost every other bit

has more of his own quality. "The

Imp Within" might be a whimsical

adornment to himself; it is printed

at the beginning of the book. And

the next one, "The Old Angler," is

"characteristic" de la Mare from be-

ginning to end:

Twilight leaned mirrored in a pool

Where willow boughs swept green

and hoar,

Silk-clear thy water calm and cool,

Silent the weedy shore.

This book contains much of this

poet's rare beauty of expression. A

single grape from the thick cluster,

plucked almost at random, must

serve to tempt taste. The first

stanza of "The Spirit of Air" is like

strained honey:

Coral and clear emerald,

And amber from the sea,

Lilac colored amethyst, chalcedony;

The lovely spirit of air

Floats on a cloud and doth ride,

Clad in the beauties of earth

Like a bride.

His frighten-the-children manner

has less representation in this vol-

ume, but here are two stanzas from

"Crazed":

I know a pool where nightshade preens

Her poisonous fruitage in the moon;

Where the frail aspen her shadow

leans

In midnight cold a-swoon.

I saw a crazed face, did I,

Stare from the lattice of a mill,

While the lank sails clacked idly by

High on the windy hill.

These close grained lines, often

grouped in narrow space, invite

wholesale quotation: "Good-Bye" is

an instance and must stand sponsor

for all the rest:

The last of last words spoken is,

good-bye—

The last dismantled flower in the weed

grown hedge,

The last thin rumor of a feeble bell

far ringing,

The last blind bat to spurn the mil-

dewed rye.

A hardening darkness glasses the

haunted eye,

Shines into nothing the watcher's

burnt out candle,

Wreathes into scentless nothing the

wasting incense,

Faints in the outer silence the hunting

cry.

Love of its muted music breathes no

sigh,

Thought in her ivory tower gropes in

her spinning,

Toss on in vain the whispering trees

of Eden,

Last of all last words spoken is

good-bye.

"Down-Adown-Derry," as this

striking picture book is called from

one of the poems, is a selection made

from Mr. de la Mare's marvelous

verses of childhood. It is sub-titled

"A Book of Fairy Poems," and it

includes some plums plucked out of

"Peacock Pie," but most of its en-

gaging content comes from the clas-

sification made in the "Collected

Poems" under the heading "Songs of

Childhood," although the classifica-

tion of "Witches and Fairies" has

been sifted for golden nuggets. The

occasion for this selection is the

illustration of many of these fairy

poems by the distinctly fairy pencil

of Miss Dorothy P. Lathrop. Just

as Heath Robinson made distinctive

—if not actually immortal, though

we should like to think so—illustra-

tions for "Peacock Pie," so these

pictures have a quality of their own

which is inclusive and suggestive

enough to fix them in the minds of

Mr. de la Mare's readers for years

to come.

"Amory Hare," bringing out a second

volume of verses, gives her book

the title of the first poem—"The

Swept Hearth":

They are so rapturous the songs I

would have made;

They are so beautiful, my never painted

skies;

The kindly deeds my spirit rushed to do

Are lost with all my moons that did

not rise.



Are gone with all the tunes I might

have played,

Yet, at the last trump, when the ac-

counting's made,

When I reply I shall not be afraid:

"I swept my hearth . . . 'twas all

that I might do."

Some of the songs of this book,

though doubtless inferior to those

above referred to, are full of emo-

tion; too often, alas, of the hair

splitting kind. The author's friends

will probably find more to admire in

the cadences of her lines than the

general public.

Moira O'Neill, author of these

charming "Songs of the Glens of

Antrim," remarks in a five line

preface that they were "written by a

Glenswoman in the dialect of the

Glens and chiefly for the pleasure of

other Glenspeople; and they are now

reprinted from "Blackwood and" the

"Spectator." They are bound to give

deep pleasure to many besides "the

Glenspeople;" the plaintive note is

not mournful, and their true music

sings on every page. A stanza from

"The Song of Glen Dun":

Summer loves the green glen, the

white bird loves the sea,

An' the wind must kiss the heather

top, an' the red bell hides a bee;

As the bee is dear to the honey flower,



so one is dear to me.

Flower o' the rose,

Flower o' the rose,

A thorn pricked me one day, but no-

body knows.

The "Song of Glenann" has been

sung by many a wanderer:

Och, when we lived in ould Glenann

Meself could lift a song!

An' ne'er an hour by day or dark

Wad I be thinkin' long.

An' now we're quarely better fixed,

In troth! there's nothin' wrong;

But me an' mine, by rain or shine,

Wad I be thinkin' long.

The last stanza of "Cuttin' Rushes"

gives a hint of its beauty:

Yesterday, yesterday, or fifty years

ago

I wakened out o' dreams when I hear

the summer thrushes.

Oh, that's the Brabla' burn, I can hear

it sing an' flow,

For all that's fair, I'd sooner see a

bunch o' green rushes.

Run, burn, run! Can ye mind when

when we were young?

The honeysuckle hangs above, the

pool is dark an' brown:

Sing, burn, sing! Can ye mind the

song ye sung

The day we cut the rushes on the

mountain?

A number of strikingly musical

translations from Italian poets add

to the beauty and value of this col-

lection of distinctive poetry.

Edwin Markham wrote in 1908 "A

Word of Introduction" to a book of

"Poems" of Gerda Dalliba, in which

he said he found "touches of the

wild beauty which is the thing

created by poetic genius." In "A

Word More," in which he tells us

that "Gerda Dalliba died near the

Mediterranean in 1913" and her

mother has now gathered this collec-



tion of her daughter's shorter poems.

There are many sonnets and a few

longer poems. The ardent spirit of

the young author flashes through

"these strange rhymes and rhapsod-

ies" with actual if fitful beauty.

"Harlem Shadows," by Claude Mc-

Kay, is a collection of verses of

which Max Eastman says in his

"Introduction" that "there poems

have a special interest for all the

racers of men because they are sung

by a pure blooded negro. Here for

the first time we find our literature

enriched by a voice from this

most alien race among us." There is

much to admire in the face of the

somewhat limited literary equipment

of this born poet, in his expression

of the emotions, often frankly ele-

mentary, which have led him away

from his first purpose to write out

songs of his race, with their "deli-

cate syllabic music," as Mr. East-

man calls it. Quotation of a stanza

or two would be unsatisfactory;

there is more than enough in the

book to repay careful reading. Mr.

Eastman declares he has "the pure,

clear, arrowlike transference of his